



## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

### **Federal Aviation Administration**

#### **14 CFR Part 39**

**[Docket No. FAA-2021-0128; Project Identifier MCAI-2020-01406-T; Amendment 39-21687; AD 2021-17-04]**

**RIN 2120-AA64**

**Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes**

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

**ACTION:** Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** The FAA is adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for certain Airbus SAS Model A321-211, -231, and -232 airplanes. This AD was prompted by a report of false drill starts found around the latch hook mounting holes of certain door frames of the fuselage due to erroneous manufacturing processes. This AD requires a one-time inspection of the area around the latch hook mounting holes of the forward and aft door frames to detect damage from false drill starts, and repair if necessary, as specified in a European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, which is incorporated by reference. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

**DATES:** This AD is effective [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain publication listed in this AD as of [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

**ADDRESSES:** For material incorporated by reference (IBR) in this AD, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email [ADs@easa.europa.eu](mailto:ADs@easa.europa.eu); Internet [www.easa.europa.eu](http://www.easa.europa.eu). You may find this IBR material on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. You may view this IBR material at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195. It is also available in the AD docket on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0128.

### **Examining the AD Docket**

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0128; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this final rule, any comments received, and other information. The address for Docket Operations is U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3223; email [Sanjay.Ralhan@faa.gov](mailto:Sanjay.Ralhan@faa.gov).

### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

#### **Background**

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2020-0222, dated October 14, 2020 (EASA AD 2020-0222)

(also referred to as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition for certain Airbus SAS Model A321-211, -231, and -232 airplanes.

The FAA issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to certain Airbus SAS Model A321-211, -231, and -232 airplanes. The NPRM published in the *Federal Register* on March 8, 2021 (86 FR 13229). The NPRM was prompted by a report of false drill starts found around the latch hook mounting holes of certain door frames of the fuselage due to erroneous manufacturing processes. The NPRM proposed to require a one-time inspection of the area around the latch hook mounting holes of the forward and aft door frames to detect damage from false drill starts, and repair if necessary, as specified in EASA AD 2020-0222.

The FAA is issuing this AD to address damage from false drill starts, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane. See the MCAI for additional background information.

## **Comments**

The FAA gave the public the opportunity to participate in developing this final rule. The following presents the comment received on the NPRM and the FAA's response.

## **Request to Add Exceptions**

Delta Air Lines (DAL) asked that the FAA add an exception to paragraph (h) of the proposed AD as follows: (1) Require inspections and corrective action, if applicable, on all airplanes having manufacturer serial numbers (MSN's) identified in the applicability, regardless of "affected" part numbers referenced in EASA AD 2020-0222; or (2) Add a clarification that if "affected parts" are not found, no inspection is required where a frame replacement has occurred on an affected frame location, and the potential

manufacturing defect has been removed because there would be a new part number designation for the spliced area and the airplane could be considered as no longer be affected.

The FAA does not agree with the commenter's request. EASA AD 2020-0222 is applicable to specific airplane MSNs, with an assertion that the current configuration continues to be installed with the part numbers that are described in EASA AD 2020-0222 as "affected part numbers." The FAA does not have any information provided by EASA that there are potential configurations that have EASA-approved modifications that are exempt from the unsafe condition. If the MSN configuration DAL referred to does not include those "affected part numbers," then there is no corresponding action for those airplanes, in accordance with the requirements in this AD. The FAA has not changed this AD in this regard.

## **Conclusion**

The FAA reviewed the relevant data, considered the comment received, and determined that air safety and the public interest require adopting this final rule as proposed, except for minor editorial changes. The FAA has determined that these minor changes:

- Are consistent with the intent that was proposed in the NPRM for addressing the unsafe condition; and
- Do not add any additional burden upon the public than was already proposed in the NPRM.

## **Related Service Information under 1 CFR Part 51**

EASA AD 2020-0222 describes procedures for a one-time detailed inspection of the area around the latch hook mounting holes of the forward and aft door frames to detect damage from false drill starts, and repair of any damage found. This material is

reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

### **Costs of Compliance**

The FAA estimates that this AD affects 21 airplanes of U.S. registry. The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this AD:

#### **Estimated costs for required actions\***

<b>Labor cost</b>	<b>Parts cost</b>	<b>Cost per product</b>	<b>Cost on U.S. operators</b>
14 work-hours X \$85 per hour = \$1,190	\$0	\$1,190	\$24,990

\*Table does not include estimated costs for reporting.

The FAA estimates that it takes about 1 work-hour per product to comply with the reporting requirement in this AD. The average labor rate is \$85 per hour. Based on these figures, the FAA estimates the cost of reporting the inspection results on U.S. operators to be \$1,785, or \$85 per product.

The FAA estimates the following costs to do any necessary on-condition repairs that are required based on the results of any required actions. The FAA has no way of determining the number of aircraft that might need these on-condition repairs:

#### **Estimated costs of on-condition actions**

<b>Labor cost</b>	<b>Parts cost</b>	<b>Cost per product</b>
Up to 42 work-hours X \$85 per hour = Up to \$3,570 (per door)	\$0*	Up to \$3,570 (per door)

\*The FAA has received no definitive data on which to base the parts cost estimates for the on-condition repairs specified in this AD.

According to the manufacturer, some or all of the costs of this AD may be covered under warranty, thereby reducing the cost impact on affected operators. The FAA does not control warranty coverage for affected operators. As a result, the FAA has included all known costs in the cost estimate.

## **Paperwork Reduction Act**

A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB control number. The control number for the collection of information required by this AD is 2120-0056. The paperwork cost associated with this AD has been detailed in the Costs of Compliance section of this document and includes time for reviewing instructions, as well as completing and reviewing the collection of information. Therefore, all reporting associated with this AD is mandatory. Comments concerning the accuracy of this burden and suggestions for reducing the burden should be directed to Information Collection Clearance Officer, Federal Aviation Administration, 10101 Hillwood Parkway, Fort Worth, TX 76177-1524.

## **Authority for this Rulemaking**

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

The FAA is issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements. Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

## **Regulatory Findings**

This AD will not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This AD will not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this AD:

- (1) Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866,
- (2) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and
- (3) Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

#### **List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39**

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

#### **Adoption of the Amendment**

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA amends 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

#### **PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES**

- 1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

#### **§ 39.13 [Amended]**

- 2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

**2021-17-04 Airbus SAS:** Amendment 39-21687; Docket No. FAA-2021-0128; Project Identifier MCAI-2020-01406-T.

#### **(a) Effective Date**

This airworthiness directive (AD) is effective [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

#### **(b) Affected ADs**

None.

**(c) Applicability**

This AD applies to Airbus SAS Model A321-211, -231, and -232 airplanes, certificated in any category, as identified in European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2020-0222, dated October 14, 2020 (EASA AD 2020-0222).

**(d) Subject**

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 53, Fuselage.

**(e) Reason**

This AD was prompted by a report of false drill starts found around the latch hook mounting holes of certain door frames of the fuselage due to erroneous manufacturing processes. The FAA is issuing this AD to address damage from false drill starts, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

**(f) Compliance**

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

**(g) Requirements**

Except as specified in paragraph (h) of this AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, EASA AD 2020-0222.

**(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2020-0222**

(1) Paragraph (3) of EASA AD 2020-0222 specifies to report inspection results to Airbus within a certain compliance time. For this AD, report inspection results at the applicable time specified in paragraph (h)(1)(i) or (ii) of this AD.

(i) If the inspection was done on or after the effective date of this AD: Submit the report within 90 days after the inspection.

(ii) If the inspection was done before the effective date of this AD: Submit the report within 90 days after the effective date of this AD.

(2) The “Remarks” section of EASA AD 2020-0222 does not apply to this AD.

**(i) Other FAA AD Provisions**

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) *Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)*: The Manager, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or responsible Flight Standards Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (j) of this AD. Information may be emailed to:

9-AVS-AIR-730-AMOC@faa.gov. Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the responsible Flight Standards Office.

(2) *Contacting the Manufacturer*: For any requirement in this AD to obtain instructions from a manufacturer, the instructions must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus SAS's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(3) *Required for Compliance (RC)*: Except as required by paragraph (i)(2) of this AD, if any service information contains procedures or tests that are identified as RC, those procedures and tests must be done to comply with this AD; any procedures or tests that are not identified as RC are recommended. Those procedures and tests that are not identified as RC may be deviated from using accepted methods in accordance with the operator's maintenance or inspection program without obtaining approval of an AMOC, provided the procedures and tests identified as RC can be done and the airplane can be put back in an airworthy condition. Any substitutions or changes to procedures or tests identified as RC require approval of an AMOC.

(4) *Paperwork Reduction Act Burden Statement*: A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB Control Number. The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 2120-0056. Public reporting for this collection of information is estimated to be approximately 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. All responses to this collection of information are mandatory as required by this AD. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Information Collection Clearance Officer, Federal Aviation Administration, 10101 Hillwood Parkway, Fort Worth, TX 76177-1524.

**(j) Related Information**

For more information about this AD, contact Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3223; email [Sanjay.Ralhan@faa.gov](mailto:Sanjay.Ralhan@faa.gov).

**(k) Material Incorporated by Reference**

(1) The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference (IBR) of the service information listed in this paragraph under 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51.

(2) You must use this service information as applicable to do the actions required by this AD, unless this AD specifies otherwise.

(i) European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2020-0222, dated October 14, 2020.

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) For EASA AD 2020-0222, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email [ADs@easa.europa.eu](mailto:ADs@easa.europa.eu); Internet [www.easa.europa.eu](http://www.easa.europa.eu). You may find this EASA AD on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>.

(4) You may view this material at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195. This material may be found in the AD docket on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0128.

(5) You may view this material that is incorporated by reference at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, email [fr.inspection@nara.gov](mailto:fr.inspection@nara.gov), or go to: <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html>.

Issued on August 7, 2021.

Gaetano A. Sciortino, Deputy Director for Strategic Initiatives,  
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,  
Aircraft Certification Service.

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